Vector or raster charts?

Euronav offers both, side by side

DUE for release on January 1 is Euronav's 32-bit Windows 95/NT version of its seaPro 2000 chart plotting system. Electronic charts may be created in vector or raster formats. Many people have their preferences, but Euronav claims that the simple truth is that neither chart is better or worse than the other. The company asserts that its seaPro system is the only system to use Livechart vector charts and ARCS and BSB raster charts in a seamless folio fashion.
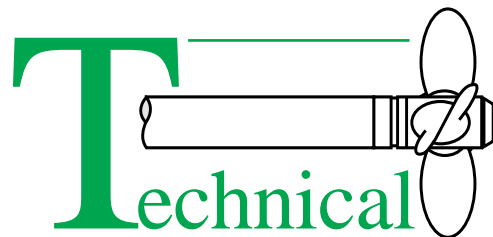
The standard version allows an unlimited number of routes and waypoints to be created (disk space permitting) and can be used with a tidal atlas and tidal curve database for accurate and fast passage planning. The 'Plus' version gives unlimited overlays, overzoom, great circle planning, vessel characteristics, fuel calculations, enhanced logging and track selection. There is an optional interface for Inmarsat satellite communications, allowing users worldwide messaging without interruption to the navigation process.

The professional version offers a more comprehensive charting plotting system to cope with moving objects in poor visibility. Euronav claims that laying a radar scan image onto a digital chart simply presents a cluttered and confusing image to the navigator. The professional version takes the radar target information from an ARPA radar and overlays the potential hazards onto a digital chart. It also has 'hooks' built in to allow customisation and has options for alternate grid co-ordinate systems. An example of where Euronav's charts have been used to great affect is on the ferry *Stena Explorer*. The company was asked to create a highly accurate port plan to allow the vessel to dock with its Linkspan. Mark Day, marketing executive for the company jokingly told *Fairplay* that the only problem was accurately locating the link within the port plan using the dimensions from engineering drawings, as they do not usually show which direction is North!

What is impressive about this application is that the helmsman docks the vessel on the Holyhead-Dun Laoghaire route at a speed of eight knots, by just using the chart on the Kværner navigation system and video cameras as a guide. The company has also provided highly accurate Linkspan charts for Stena ferries on the Stranraer to Belfast, Harwich to Hook and Gothenburg to Fredrikshavn runs.

Another application is providing passengers with information on board the cruiseship *Oriana*. The system is plumbed through the passenger television system to provide a real-time visual plot as well as pictures and textual information relating to the cruise itinerary.
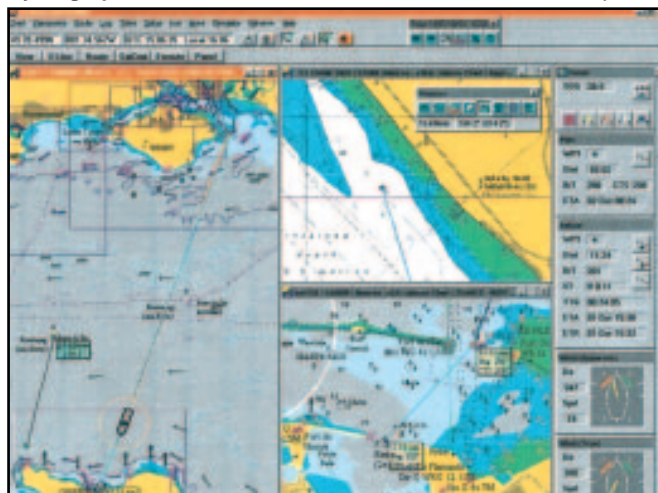
Euronav also offers a vessel-tracking system based around the seaPro 2000 plotting system. It can be operated over a number of communication channels including VHF DSC, MF/HF DSC, Inmarsat C, Satcomm via earth station and phone networks and packet switched radio networks. Positions are shown accurately overlaid on a high quality colour chart. A box shows comprehensive vessel, passage and cargo information taken from the system's internal database, which can be linked to a vessel's reporting/scheduling system.

Recent Euronav projects have included equipping the UK Coastguard (in conjunction with ICS Electronics and Marconi) with a networked supplementary tracking system, working over VHF DSC.

The seaPro 2000 electronic navigation system, which uses seamless high quality vector (Livecharts) with raster (UK Hydrographic Office's ARCS and the American BSB formats)

Shell is taken by raster charts

WHILE the integrity of the raster chart is still under discussion at the IMO (see *Fairplay* September 18), Shell International Trading and Shipping is yet another company to install the raster chart display system, this time on 47 vessels throughout its fleet.

Navmaster Professional Office, made by Plymouth-based PC Maritime, has been installed on Shell's tankers and gas carriers of between 11,000 and 315,000 dwt. "We wanted to invest in a system which has a future, so when we eventually meke the switch from paper to electronic charts our personnel will be familiar with the concept of electronic charts," said fleet audit superintendent captain John Bateman. "PC Maritime and its Navmaster system fulfilled our requirements."

Shell's company-approved route format will now be loaded into the Navmaster systems to ensure compliance with the company's safety management system, which satisfies the ISM Code. Navmaster has also been adapted at Shell's request, so the passage plan report allows notes to be recorded for every waypoint and route. A further three systems have also been bought for the company's fleet audit superintendents to assist in onboard training.